

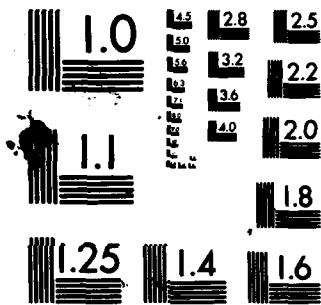
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IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

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**STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE  
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania**

**SOVIET CHALLENGES FOR THE 1980's:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES**

by

**Keith A. Dunn**

**20 May 1982**

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Composition of this memorandum was accomplished by Mrs. Karen K. Bailey.

## FOREWORD

↓ This memorandum develops a US political-military strategy for dealing with the USSR in the coming decade. To do this, the author examines US interests and objectives. He analyzes the most significant economic, political, and military trends confronting Soviet decisionmakers and suggests possible Soviet solutions for those trends. Finally, the author concludes with a section on US strategic issues and the most appropriate options for the United States to pursue to achieve its interests and objectives vis-a-vis the USSR in the coming decade. ←

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This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

  
JACK N. MERRITT  
Major General, USA  
Commandant

#### **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR**

**DR. KEITH A. DUNN** joined the Strategic Studies Institute as a civilian in the summer of 1977. Prior to that time he was an Army intelligence officer. Dr. Dunn earned a master's degree and doctorate from the University of Missouri-Columbia in American diplomatic relations. He has contributed chapters to several books on Soviet foreign and defense policy and his articles have appeared in various professional journals including *Orbis*, *Naval War College Review*, *Parameters*, *Journal of the Royal United States Institute for Defense Studies*, and *Military Review*.

## SUMMARY

The primary purpose of this memorandum is to highlight some of the major strategic issues facing the United States in its future relations with the USSR and to propose options for the United States to pursue in the coming decade. In laying the ground work for these initiatives, US interests and objectives are discussed and then Soviet economic, political, and military trends are analyzed. The author describes how Soviet trends and possible solutions may impact upon the Soviet military. These conclusions guide his assessment of options and strategic initiatives to be pursued.

Given US interests and objectives and Soviet trends, the author discusses four major strategic issues confronting the United States. The author recognizes that the potential problems necessitating superpower attention can not be limited to only the four issues discussed. However, he does believe that in order of priority the issues are some of the most important which need to be addressed.

The four issues analyzed are: First, the need to pursue active strategic nuclear arms negotiations. This is required not just because of a desire to limit weapons or reduce the size of defense arsenals. Rather strategic nuclear arms negotiations are a necessity to reduce the number of imponderables facing a strategist who must plan and procure weapons to deter the USSR. Without successful arms negotiations, Western strategists are left to guess what the Soviets will consider the optimum ceiling to be. But, with successful arms control negotiations an opponent's future forces can be fixed, and strategic planning and procurement can be tailored for an expected future. Second, the United States needs to decide what policy instruments are likely to be the most successful in achieving its interests in the Third World. Despite growing Soviet economic, political, and military involvement in the Third World, the author concludes that the US interests and objectives are best served by adopting economic and political initiatives that work to eliminate Third World internal problems which invite Soviet military meddling. Third, if the United States continues to believe that one of its major objectives is to improve East-West relations in an attempt to defuse sources of potential military conflict, now—not later—is the time to get that process in motion. A political succession crisis is imminent in Moscow. It would appear better to deal with a known person—Brezhnev—in any attempt to revive East-West relations rather than waiting until the succession struggle



and attempting to negotiate with possibly unknown persons or groups. Fourth, what role should economic diplomacy play in our future relations with the Soviet Union? The author concludes that the United States must walk a line between conveying the image that there is no connection between Soviet actions and US economic policy and trying to coerce the USSR when its economy is in difficulty. One issue is clear however; no US interests or objectives would be served if US economic diplomacy encourages Moscow to follow autarky. A Soviet Union which decides upon such an approach would be more hawkish, more conservative, and even more inclined than at present toward military diplomacy.

### **SOVIET CHALLENGES FOR THE 1980's: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES**

Soviet-American relations are currently at a crossroads. Some observers see the beginnings—if not the reality—of a return to the Cold War. Clearly the acrimonious language which has passed between Washington and Moscow in recent months is much more typical of the 1950's or 1960's than of the early 1970's. The small amount of political understanding that might have existed between the two superpowers in the early 1970's no longer exists. It began to unravel as a result of Soviet activities in Angola and Ethiopia and was crushed by the invasion of Afghanistan.

How to deal with the current tension in the superpower relationship is a major issue of concern in both Washington and Moscow. Decisions made in the two capitals during the next few years not only will determine the character of superpower relations for the decade of the 1980's but also significantly will affect the international environment and global issues until the end of the century. While there is no scarcity of advocacy positions on how to deal with the Soviet Union, there is a lack of good analysis using a strategist's tool—i.e., what are US interests and objectives in its relationship with the USSR? What are Soviet trends? How will those trends impact upon the United States achieving its interests

and objectives? Given Soviet trends, what options/alternatives are available that give the United States a good chance of achieving its interests and objectives during the 1980's? These are the questions and issues that this paper will address.

## INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES

The fundamental building blocks of strategy are the concepts of national interests and specific objectives to support the attainment of national interests. Essentially there are four fundamental national interests common to all nations: survival, protection of territorial integrity, maintenance or enhancement of economic well-being, and promotion of a favorable world order.<sup>1</sup> Since the end of World War II, the Soviet Union has been the only nation considered a serious threat to the most salient US interests—those relating to survival, territorial integrity, and world order. As a result, nearly every foreign policy and defense issue in the last 35 years has been predicated on the intelligence community's assessment of Soviet capabilities and trends and policymakers' evaluations of Soviet interests and trends. During the coming decade the United States will face some significant challenges to its interests which will be related only marginally to the USSR—e.g., resource dependence, nuclear proliferation, Third World conflicts, and international economic instability. However, the invasion of Afghanistan, concerns about enhanced Soviet power projection capabilities, and the fear that the Soviet achievement of nuclear parity has made the Kremlin more bold and adventuresome, insures that the Soviet Union will still be perceived as the most significant threat to the achievement of US interests and will continue to control the central focus of US national security affairs during the 1980's.

To achieve its fundamental national interests several broad national objectives traditionally have guided US foreign and defense policies. The primary objective is to prevent hostile nations from attacking the United States, its territories, and its overseas bases. The threat of invasion of the continental United States has always been remote. However, the advent of the nuclear age and ICBM's meant that the continental United States not only could be attacked but also the survival of the United States could be threatened without a traditional land invasion of a foreign army.

As a result, for the last 30 years, protection of US territorial integrity has been based on four principles: (1) strategic nuclear deterrence to be achieved by building a triad of offensive strategic nuclear forces which provide the United States with an assured destruction capability making it not worth the risk for the Soviets to strike the United States first; (2) negotiation of formal, detailed and verifiable strategic nuclear arms control agreements; (3) prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation; (4) avoidance of direct military conflict between the United States and Soviet Union because of a fear on the part of both superpowers that this would rapidly escalate to a nuclear war.

Traditionally, US interests have been best served by an international environment of stability in which change occurs through evolution rather than the result of political revolution. As a result, a second major US objective has been the promotion of peaceful solutions to world problems. Particularly, the United States is interested in deterring the USSR from using regional conflicts to further its political and military influence at the expense of the United States. While there is an essential consensus upon this objective as a US goal, there is considerable disagreement on how best to achieve it.

Since the end of World War II, containment of communism has been an important objective. It has evolved from the containment of monolithic communism that was believed to exist in the 1950's and 1960's to the more recent approach of selective containment of Soviet political-military influence. To achieve this objective, US military strategy for the last 30 years has been based upon the concepts of forward defense and collective security, primarily to insure that US allies and other friendly states can resist Soviet political, economic, and military coercion.

Where and when feasible, the United States has sought to improve East-West relations in an attempt to defuse sources of potential military conflict. This objective is based on the assumption that fostering economic and political interdependence between the USSR and the West will result in less aggressive destabilizing behavior on the part of the USSR. Recent Soviet actions have caused many observers to question this objective; however, it still remains as a stated objective of US policy.

Finally, if deterrence fails and peaceful resolution of world problems proves impossible, it is an American objective to

maintain sufficient conventional and strategic forces to defend US interests by military force until such conflicts can be terminated on terms favorable to the United States. When deterrence fails, US declaratory policy is to end conflicts as rapidly as possible and, as former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown has said, "to contain conflict at the lowest level, especially in those instances that involve Soviet forces or that could escalate to include Soviet involvement and/or lead to a wider war."<sup>2</sup>

## TRENDS

Predictions about how any nation will handle its economic, political, and military trends are extremely hazardous enterprises. In the case of the Soviet Union the problem is doubly difficult given the secrecy surrounding Kremlin decisionmaking. Nevertheless, it is necessary to venture into this difficult area of prediction before turning to discuss alternatives/options to achieve US interests and objectives. This section will discuss some of the more important economic, political, and military trends facing the USSR in the 1980's. The economic trends are discussed first because they are the most immediate and severe problems confronting the Soviet decisionmakers. How the Soviets handle their economic problems directly will affect future Soviet political and military trends.

*Economic Trends.* The Soviet Union's economic future is less than promising. In the short to mid-range period, the Soviet Union faces an era of increasing difficulties and strains upon its domestic economy. The Kremlin's ability to solve these more short-range problems will determine its long-range economic future. Like most nations of the world, the USSR has experienced a declining average annual economic growth rate over the last decade and predictions are that this trend will continue. Whereas in the early rebuilding years of the post-World War II period, the Soviet Gross National Product (GNP) grew at an average annual rate of 6 percent, in the 1970's its growth fell to below 4 percent. Assuming a stable domestic and international environment, the Central Intelligence Agency believes that Soviet economic growth will not be higher than 2.5 percent from 1981 to 1985. More pessimistic assessments suggest that Soviet economic growth may be as low as 1 or 2 percent by the mid-1980's. The main factors contributing to this bleak economic assessment are demographic trends, unpredictable resource base, and poor agricultural performance.

Soviet population growth and particularly the pattern of regional distribution may be the single most important factor affecting the future of the Soviet economy. In the past, the Soviet Union has largely depended upon its ability to increase its labor input to increase its economic output. However, Soviet population trends indicate that this may no longer be a feasible alternative and worker productivity, which traditionally has been low, will have to be increased to offset a shortage in the labor supply. With predictions that the Soviet population will increase at a rate of no more than .8 percent annually over the next 20 years, US Commerce Department estimates that, by as early as the mid-1980's, there may not be enough 18-year-old males to meet Soviet economic and military requirements, unless Moscow makes major changes in its labor allocation policies.<sup>3</sup>

A decline in available labor supply is only part of the Soviet problem, however. The pattern of Soviet population growth is extremely uneven. Over the next two decades an increasing share of the total Soviet population will occur in the Central Asian Republics (Uzbekistan, Kirgizia, Tadzhikistan, and Turkmenistan), where industry and natural resources are lacking. Currently these republics account for about 8 percent of the total population. By 1990, they will have between 11 to 12 percent of the population and by 2000 the estimates run as high as 13 to 16 percent. If the Transcaucasus region and Kazakhstan are included, the Central Asian and Southern Republics could account for as much as 25 percent of the total Soviet population by the end of the 1980's and as much as 30 percent of total Soviet population by the beginning of the 21st century. This growth will occur at the same time that the proportion of the population living in areas normally inhabited by Great Russians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians, where the majority of the industry is located, will be declining as a total percentage of Soviet population. Central Asians are a particularly immobile group of Soviet population. Therefore, the Soviet leaderships will find it increasingly difficult over the next decade to match its labor pool with industry and natural resources.<sup>4</sup>

Economic self-sufficiency is a basic Soviet tenet. Fortunately for the USSR, it has been generally well-endowed with natural resources. However, as older resource fields are being depleted, the Soviets have been forced to turn to areas where it is more difficult to recover resources, particularly Siberia. In addition, it appears

that, in some resource areas, the Soviets are exhausting supplies faster than originally expected.

The Soviet oil future and its need to import oil has sparked a significant debate in recent years. The original CIA estimates on this issue were and still are controversial because they are based on important assumptions about the Soviet ability to discover new fields, how many proven reserves exist and Soviet technological ability to exploit new fields when and if they are discovered. In 1977, the CIA predicted that the Soviet Union would need to import between 3.5 to 4.5 million barrels of oil a day by the mid-1980's. Subsequent reports lowered the original estimates to less than 1 million barrels of oil a day by the mid-1980's. Now the most recent CIA estimates suggest that during the 1980's the Soviet Union will not have to import any oil to meet its domestic consumption needs.<sup>1</sup>

Even if CIA estimates are now correct and the USSR will be self-sufficient in oil, a decline in its ability to export oil will still create difficult dilemmas for Soviet planners in the coming decade. Traditionally, the USSR has received most of its hard currency from the export of raw materials. Exports of oil and natural gas have usually accounted for 40-50 percent of Soviet hard currency earnings. If major reductions in oil exports to hard currency nations occur, Moscow may find it difficult to acquire the Western technology which is needed to modernize the Soviet industrial base.

One way for the USSR to maintain its hard currency balance would be to shift oil away from its East European allies to Western hard currency markets. There are, however, at least two good reasons why the Soviet Union would prefer not to adopt such an option, except as a last resort. First, Moscow already had encouraged its East European allies to look for other sources of oil, told its allies that oil allotments during the decade would be no higher than 1980 levels, and raised the price of Soviet oil nearer to world market prices. These actions have already begun to strain some East European economies. It is very likely that during the coming decade some East European nations will have to backtrack upon their pledges to improve domestic standards of living and provide more consumer goods. Events in Poland during 1970, 1976, and 1980 rather clearly demonstrate that failure to meet consumer pledges can spark political unrest and instability in at least one East European nation. Second, since Moscow has been

able to achieve significant control over its East European partners by acting as the predominant supplier of relatively cheap raw materials, any reduction in this role undoubtedly would result in some loss of Soviet influence in the region. Therefore, even if the Soviet oil future is not as bleak as originally thought, the probability that the USSR may not be able to provide its East European allies with sufficient levels of oil at favorable prices means that the overall Eastern bloc economic future is less than optimistic and this must trouble Kremlin planners.

There are some indications that, during the 1980's, the USSR will be required to import increasing levels of nonfuel mineral resources to meet Soviet and East European requirements. In the past, the USSR has been a major exporter of phosphate rock, potash, sulphur, manganese ore, chrome, copper, zinc, titanium, platinum, palladium, mercury, magnesium, vanadium, cadmium, asbestos, diamonds, and iron ore. While the Soviets continue to be net exporters of many of these mineral resources, Figure 1 indicates that the Soviets have recently begun to import larger quantities of their mineral needs. When East European requirements are considered, the import percentages increase. For example, the East Europeans import 90 percent of their tin. A large portion of this comes from the USSR but increasingly they have been turning to Southeast Asian suppliers.<sup>6</sup> In 1977, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe imported 68 percent of their cobalt, 28 percent of their bauxite, 13 percent of their nickel, 10 percent of their silver and 23 percent of their phosphate requirements.<sup>7</sup> Finally, the USSR has begun to cut back its exports of some minerals. In 1979-80, Soviet world exports of chrome and platinum group minerals were down 50 percent. Exports of gold declined approximately 40 percent, manganese and lithium exports declined significantly, and the USSR ceased exporting tantalum and vanadium to the world.<sup>8</sup>

During the 1980's, the Soviet Union will never be as dependent upon foreign raw materials as are the United States, Europe, or Japan. Nevertheless, despite Soviet desires for self-sufficiency and its rich resource base, projections indicate that the Soviet Union and particularly Eastern Europe may need to become more involved in the international raw material market to acquire natural resources. As a result, Soviet incentives for political, economic, and military involvement in the Third World may increase.



# SOVIET UNION IMPORT DEPENDENCE

(1976 through 1980)

Mineral	% Imported	Source	Reported Production/Source
Fluorspar	52	Kenya (54%), Morocco (36%), Thailand (10%)	All
Molybdenum	51	United States (15%)	United States
Bauxite	43	Guinea (70%), Yugoslavia (18%), Greece (12%)	All
Alumina	38	Hungary (44%), Jamaica (18%), Guyana (13%), United States (13%), Italy (8%), Turkey (4%)	All except Italy
Cobalt	38	Cuba (45%), Zaire (40%)*, France, Belgium, United Kingdom (5%)	Cuba, Zaire
Tungsten	26	China, Mongolia (20%); Australia and West (80%)	All
Antimony	19	Turkey (72%), Yugoslavia (26%), China (2%)	All
Tin	18	United Kingdom (67%), Malaysia (22%), Bolivia (10%), Vietnam (1%)	All
Nickel	14	Cuba (concentrate/100%)	Cuba
Lead	11	Yugoslavia, North Korea, United Kingdom, Peru	All

\* Estimate for 1980 only.

Source: The Resource War in 3-D - Dependency, Diplomacy, Defense.  
(Pittsburgh, PA: World Affairs Council, 1980), p. 47.

Figure 1. Soviet Union Import Dependence.

The third major factor affecting the Soviet economic future is agricultural performance. While overall Soviet agricultural progress for the last 20 years has been respectable with an average growth of 3.5 percent, agriculture continues to be the least productive sector of the Soviet economy. Low labor productivity, high production costs, and serious environmental constraints are the major Soviet agricultural problems.<sup>9</sup>

The ability of the USSR to fulfill mid-range production goals for meat and grain will be a major test for Soviet agriculture. In 1978, Brezhnev called for meat production to reach 19.5 million tons and the grain target to be increased to 260 million tons by 1985. However, at the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress, Soviet meat and grain targets were lowered considerably. The new meat target is 18.2 million tons by 1985. To meet this goal, the Soviets will have to achieve an average annual meat production of 17 to 17.5 million tons for the entire period of the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The new grain target for 1985 is 238 to 243 million tons. Because of unpredictable weather patterns and the lack of expected agricultural breakthroughs, it is unlikely that the Soviets can achieve even these lower grain production goals, which directly will impact on the Soviet Union's ability to fulfill its meat production goals.<sup>10</sup> Shortfalls in grain production will continue to cause a recurring need to import grain. How much of the shortfalls can be offset will depend upon the USSR's ability to acquire grain on the world market. To the extent that the Soviet leadership tries to improve consumer conditions and is willing to spend hard currency, grain will be imported. However, in the past, Moscow has obtained hard currency primarily from its exports of natural resources. If, in the future, the USSR must import larger quantities of its resource needs while its export of natural resources declines, an adverse impact on Moscow's ability to import grain could result. In the final analysis, the future does not promise any significant changes in Soviet agriculture. In some years, grain production and imports will be enough to feed both the population and livestock herds. In other years, it will not and the feast or famine syndrome of killing livestock herds because of a bad grain harvest will probably continue throughout the 1980's.

Obviously, the domestic economic problems facing Soviet planners are many and varied. Can the Kremlin solve them? The answer to that question largely depends on what options the Soviets choose to follow in the next decade. Holland Hunter has suggested three very plausible approaches that the Soviets could adopt.<sup>11</sup>

The first approach would be "muddling through" or business-as-usual. Patterns of economic investment among heavy industry, light industry, national defense and other government activities would remain virtually unchanged. In other words, the defense and heavy industry sectors would continue to receive a disproportionate

share of the Soviet total budget. The Soviets would encourage national minorities from labor-rich Central Asia and southern republics to migrate but there would be no forced migration program. The USSR would attempt to acquire Western technology on a selected basis, but massive inputs of high technology from the West would be resisted. Therefore, most Soviet industry would continue to use antiquated technologies keeping industrial output from expanding significantly. Soviet Gross National Production would continue to increase but at a rate no higher, and probably lower, than was experienced in the 1970's.

Another approach, the "liberal scenario," would involve major economic changes. The Soviets would attempt to make their economic system more adaptable and flexible in order to compete in the world market place. Domestic market forces would play a more important role in determining resource allocations. According to Hunter, if the Soviets adopted this approach, they would place an increased emphasis upon expanding foreign trade. Priority would be given to producing more consumer goods and modernizing the industrial base. To support such ambitious objections, acquisition of Western technology would be encouraged. Under this scenario, it is assumed that Soviet GNP would increase significantly because of improved labor productivity, enhanced worker and consumer morale, and a modernized technological base.

A third alternative, the "conservative scenario," would stress increased centralized controls. Emphasis would be given to high visibility, giant projects similar to Stalin's economic approach. Heavy industry and national defense would receive an increased share of the GNP. Consumer interest would receive very little, if any, attention. Economic innovation would be discouraged and an economic manager's main objective would be to fulfill the centralized plan. When labor shortages occurred, workers would be forced to migrate. Foreign trade and technology transfers would be discouraged and autarky would be emphasized. Nationalism would be stressed, dissidents repressed, and external threats to the motherland would be emphasized.

There are foreign policy and defense issues associated with each of these approaches. The liberal approach would give emphasis to international trade and would tend to foster economic interdependence. Presumably, it would give the Kremlin a greater

stake in international peace and stability. The effect it would have on the Soviet military is somewhat unclear. On one hand, a higher GNP could mean more money available for the military. On the other hand, if this approach were adopted, Hunter believes that it would signal a commitment to put less emphasis upon the military component as the sole attribute of Soviet superpower status. More attention would be given to creating an economic, developed and successful society which developing nations would want to emulate.

The foreign and defense consequences of the "conservative scenario" would appear to be just the opposite of the "liberal scenario." A Soviet Union that was intent upon achieving autarky, concerned about external threats, and investing heavily in the military would contribute to international tensions and instability. The USSR might use its military to acquire needed natural resources and avoid a growing resource dependency. The cumulative effect of the tendencies associated with the "conservative approach" would make it very difficult to reduce East-West tensions or revive detente in the future. Under the "muddling through" approach there probably would be no major changes from current general Soviet foreign policy lines.

Which one of these alternatives is the Kremlin likely to adopt? There are factors that would argue in each one's favor. Prior to the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress some observers suggested that the domestic economic problems confronting the Soviets were so immense that the Party Congress might chart a new economic path along the lines of either the "liberal" or "conservative" scenarios. However, the Eleventh Five Year Plan appears to be more in line with the "muddling through" approach. Soviet workers were told to work harder, increase labor productivity, save more, waste less, use resources better, reduce the number of administrative bottlenecks, and increase party discipline in order to reduce mismanagement and increase worker discipline. The Party Congress did encourage greater use of private agricultural plots to increase agricultural production. N.A. Tikhonov, Kosygin's replacement as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, implied that the USSR would like to obtain economic credits and technology from the West.<sup>12</sup> However, *in toto*, the new Five Year Plan appears to be still tinkering with the Soviet system rather than charting new economic paths.

As a result, without some major national catastrophe, it is not

likely that the Soviet Union will make major reforms in its economic system in the 1980's. This means that the military and heavy industry sectors will continue to receive the most important percentage shares of Soviet GNP. It is possible that the military percentage of GNP could actually increase. However, as former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown commented in his last posture statement, it is important that US policymakers not draw the wrong conclusions from such a projection: "If the percentage of Soviet GNP going to defense were to rise in the future, it may well be not because the level of defense effort will rise more rapidly than in the past, but rather because military spending will continue to grow at traditional rates while overall economic growth rates slow significantly."<sup>13</sup>

*Political Trends.* The single most important political issue facing the Soviet Union in the 1980's is political succession.<sup>14</sup> Some observers thought that at the Twenty-Sixth Party Congress Brezhnev might resign because of age and ill-health. When he failed to step down voluntarily, Brezhnev virtually insured that the Soviet succession would occur as it has in the past, i.e., unplanned, with a period of internal struggle and some potential for civil disorder and instability.

Exactly when the leadership change will occur or what groups will assume authority is unclear at this date. Brezhnev has groomed no one to follow him and seems to have made a concerted effort to insure that no one person in the Politburo has sufficient power to challenge him. Nevertheless, historical patterns indicate how the process may occur and suggest some policy implications that could emerge as a result of a succession struggle.

The impending leadership change will most likely occur in stages and will be a prolonged process. It took Stalin most of the 1920's before he undercut his rivals and consolidated his position of authority. Both Khrushchev and Brezhnev maneuvered with their rivals for at least 4 years before they emerged as first among equals. Every indication is that a similar situation will occur when Brezhnev leaves office.

The two people most often cited as candidates to oversee the first succession stage are Andrei Kirilenko and Konstantin Chernenko. Since Kirilenko is three months older than Brezhnev, Chernenko is over 70, and the other immediate Brezhnev heirs are at least in their late 60's, actuarial tables would indicate that any caretaker regime

would not remain in power for an extended period. During the first succession stage, no major changes in Soviet politics should occur. Those who will probably run the caretaker regime are identified with Brezhnev policies; they rose to power with or because of Brezhnev's support; they share the same World War II and postwar experiences with Brezhnev; and they seem to be committed to the goals which Brezhnev articulated. Since none of the potential heirs for the first succession stage have the prestige or political power to emerge as the uncontested head of the party, a form of collective leadership should develop.

While the caretaker government oversees the immediate Brezhnev succession, a number of other rivals will probably vie for power. Only after this period of internal political maneuvering, which could last as long as 4 or 5 years, will a new Soviet General-Secretary emerge. During this second succession stage, a group of men with different political backgrounds than their predecessors will compete for power. Whoever emerges as the new Soviet leader will have no memories of prerevolutionary Russia or any personal knowledge of Lenin. He will have experienced World War II as a very young man. All of his secondary education will have occurred in the Stalin period. Most of his adult years will encompass the period when the USSR became a global military power. The incumbent will probably have long experience in management of the economy or the territorial party apparatus and very little experience in foreign affairs. The emerging generation of Soviet leaders will be better educated than their predecessors. This does not mean that they will be any more sophisticated than the preceding generation. Although they will be politically experienced, the emerging leadership group will not have the long tenure in very top ranks of the Soviet elite that Brezhnev and his associates had (virtually the entire postwar period). As a result, their claims for authority may be more easily questioned by rivals.

Will the new Soviet leadership be more aggressive and adventuresome? One school of thought is that the Soviet "window of opportunity"—a period when Soviet military power is at its peak and before the above mentioned domestic problems begin to constrain Soviet options—is sometime during the 1980's.<sup>1</sup> A Soviet recognition that the window is closing, it is argued, could cause the Kremlin to use its military forces to gain strategic advantages before it loses the opportunity. However, if a succession struggle

occurs sometime during the next decade and historical precedent holds true, the USSR may actually enter a period of less active foreign policy as the new leaders attempt to consolidate their domestic positions. While one should not completely discount the possibility of a new orientation of Soviet policy, current analysis of the backgrounds and known attitudes of the emerging leadership group suggests fundamental continuity in Soviet policy for the 1980's. Their memories of the Great Patriotic War and considerable pride in the USSR's postwar rise to superpower status, as well as their 20-year tutelage by a political leadership that has emphasized stability of personnel and policy, "business-like" caution, and consensus-seeking decisions, suggests that the new Soviet leaders will be primarily nationalistic and pragmatic rather than ideological in their approach to world politics. This does not mean that the Soviet threat to US interests will diminish during the midrange. Rather, it means that another Khrushchev-style personality, who leads the USSR off into erratic policy zigzags, will probably not emerge as the new Soviet leader for the 1990's. However, if US policymakers feel threatened by Brezhnev's foreign policy initiatives in the 1980's, there is good reason to believe that they will feel equally threatened when an unknown Soviet group assumes power and this group will have more military power available to it than did Stalin, Khrushchev, or Brezhnev after they won their succession battles.

*Military Trends.* Soviet leaders believe that the growth of their military power has permitted them to play a more active political role in the world during the last 20 years and to expand Soviet worldwide influence. They see military strength as a crucial element not only for expanding Soviet influence in the future but also for consolidating and preserving past gains. They correctly perceive that military strength is the foundation of the Soviet Union's status as a global power. As was mentioned in the economic section above, it is unlikely in the immediate future that any major economic changes will occur to enhance the perception of the Soviet Union as a global economic power. Therefore, military strength should continue as the key of Soviet international behavior.

Soviet military trends in long-range power projection capabilities and strategic nuclear forces are two areas which have concerned US policymakers the most in recent years. Because of this concern, this

section on military trends will focus on Soviet power projection and strategic nuclear forces for the 1980's. In the power projection area, extensive force modernization programs have changed the character of Soviet forces during the Brezhnev era. The Soviet Navy is probably the largest benefactor in these programs. It has changed from a coastal defense force to a globally deployed navy. New classes of ships that entered the inventory in the late 1960's and 1970's, such as the *Kresta II* (1970), *Krivak* (1971), *Kara* (1973), *Moskva* (1967), *Kiev* (1975), and *Ivan Rogov* (1978), are clearly more versatile than their predecessors. Assuming a service life of 25 years, these ships should be the Soviet mainstays throughout the 1980's and part of the 1990's.

Soviet strategic airlift capabilities (VTA) have been similarly enhanced. Over the last decade, the total number of aircraft has declined by approximately 20 percent. However, overall lift capacity increased significantly when the AN-22's and Il-76's entered the inventory.

Improved equipment and new military capabilities have allowed the Kremlin to exploit opportunities which it was unable to do in the past. The Soviet Union is involved in areas of the world where it traditionally never has ventured. Moscow can now provide friends and allies, as well as its own forces, with equipment, supplies, and military assistance to a degree that was previously impossible. This capability is obvious when one compares the level of assistance that Moscow could provide Angola, Ethiopia, Egypt, Vietnam, and Afghanistan in the 1970's with its lack of capability in the Congo in the 1960's.

Despite major improvements in Soviet forces, significant military constraints still exist which adversely affect Soviet force projection capabilities. While the USSR has made significant improvements in its strategic logistical capabilities during the last two decades, if additional improvements are not made during the next 20 years, Soviet force projection capabilities will continue to be constrained. Currently, the only plane capable of lifting outsized loads in the Soviet inventory is the An-22 COCK and production of this plane ceased in 1974. The Soviets apparently have experienced great difficulty in developing the technology or acquiring Western technology to build a widebodied jet that would be a follow-on to the An-22. Until the USSR can develop or acquire the necessary technology, its ability to airlift outsized loads to distances greater than 2000 miles from the USSR will be severely constrained.



Naval logistical weaknesses will continue to limit Soviet abilities to sustain at-sea combat operations, if they occur in areas distant from the Soviet Union. The current afloat replenishment force is structured and trained primarily for peacetime operations. The Soviets have deployed six large new fleet replenishment ships for fuels, stores, and ammunition, the *Boris Chilikin*, and one new replenishment oiler, the 40,000-ton *Berezhina*. However, construction has been much slower than originally expected. At current rates of construction, the Soviets would have no more than 20 to 22 *Boris Chilikin* ships by the end of the 1990's. While this will improve Soviet capabilities, it will not significantly alter the current low ratio of fleet support ships to combatants that limits Soviet power projection capabilities.

The Soviet Navy's dependence on land-based air support has been another constraint upon its power projection capabilities. This should remain throughout the 1980's and through most of the 1990's. Currently the sea-based air support for the Soviet Navy is provided by *Moskva* helicopter carriers and *Kiev* vertical/short take-off and landing carriers. There are two *Moskva* and two *Kiev* class ships, with two more *Kievs* under construction, now in the Soviet inventory. Both of these ships are primarily anti-submarine warfare vessels and can not provide the types of air support required for modern warfare at sea. However, the Soviets are in the process of constructing an air-superiority carrier.<sup>16</sup> If the Soviets have no major construction problems with their new carrier and given current construction rates and yard capacity, Michael McGwire estimates that by 1995 the Soviets could have seven or eight air-capable ships: two *Moskva*, four *Kiev*, and one or two large aircraft carriers. A new carrier could enter the Soviet navy every 6 years.<sup>17</sup> If the Soviets would decide for some reason not to go into full production of this new carrier, it has been estimated that a total of 13 *Kievs* could be in the Soviet inventory by the year 2000.<sup>18</sup>

In the strategic nuclear forces area, sea-based forces will play an increasingly important role for the 1980's and 1990's. The Soviets could have as many as 75 SSBN's with 1200 launchers by the early 1990's, if there is no SALT agreement.<sup>19</sup> Estimates for land-based ICBM's run as high as 1500 to 1600 launchers by the end of the 1980's without a SALT agreement. This strategic nuclear force would give the Soviets between 14,000 and 20,000 separate nuclear

warheads.<sup>20</sup> While the greatest bulk of those warheads would still be found on the ICBM force, 3500 to 4000 warheads on submarines that could operate from inside the Barents Sea and Sea of Okhotsk would give the Soviet Union a nearly invulnerable second-strike force.

Whether the Soviet Union can achieve these high estimates is questionable given the significant economic problems that it faces in the coming years. However, from a Soviet perspective, maintaining strategic nuclear parity with the United States is extremely important.<sup>21</sup> The Soviets believe that it was only after they obtained parity that the United States recognized them as a great power and would negotiate with Moscow. From a Soviet perspective, parity reduced not only the possibilities of a US military attack upon the USSR but also US intervention in other parts of the world. Brezhnev and other Soviet spokesmen have declared on a number of occasions that the USSR will never allow the United States to regain strategic superiority for these reasons. Therefore, it seems that even in an economically-constrained environment, the Soviets will try to devote the necessary resources to maintain strategic nuclear parity.

#### WHAT SHOULD THE UNITED STATES DO?

Given US interests and objectives and Soviet trends, what are the major strategic issues confronting the United States in the mid range and what options should be adopted to deal with those issues? The final trend discussed in the preceding section—the inability to predict with any level of certainty how many strategic nuclear launchers and warheads the Soviets will have by even the mid-1980's—is a good starting point for a discussion of major strategic issues facing US policymakers in the mid range.

In the coming decade, to pursue or not to pursue strategic arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union will be an area of major concern. If it is Soviet military might or the potential for unrelenting growth that policymakers fear most, then it seems only logical that strategic nuclear arms control negotiations should be pursued. Arms control negotiations are not—and should not be—separate actions sought merely to limit the size of defense arsenals or reduce costs. Rather, arms control negotiations should contribute to national defense by providing force programmers and

strategists with some reasonable idea of what maximum forces the adversary will have at its disposal in the future. Without reasonable arms negotiations and limitations, there is no "expected ceiling or umbrella" for the Soviet Union to grow toward and not exceed. Without successful arms negotiations and limitations, Western strategists are left to guess what the Soviets will consider their optimum ceiling to be. But, with successful arms control negotiations an opponent's future forces can be fixed, and, as a result, strategic planning and procurement policies can be tailored for an expected future. Therefore, early and active strategic nuclear arms negotiations are necessary to avoid the problem of US strategists being required to guess about both Soviet intentions and potential capabilities as they attempt to design and procure a US strategic nuclear force to deter the USSR.

Another issue of strategic importance is that the United States must decide which policy instruments are likely to be most successful in achieving US interests in the Third World. This will be particularly important if the projections about growing Soviet resource dependence become a reality. While it is currently fashionable to see an irreversible dependency relationship developing between the Soviet Union and Third World nations once Soviet or East European advisers arrive or Soviet arms and equipment are provided, obtaining influence over another nation is not a one-sided relationship. It is a mutually interactive process and not something that one nation holds over another like a club. Thus, it is not necessarily true that the nation which has the most obvious and visible economic, military or political capabilities will automatically have the most influence in this dynamic relationship.

Moscow has been able to enhance its position in some Third World nations primarily because of the military tools it has been willing to provide. However, its ability to maintain its influence over the long term has been spotty at best. As a generality, many Third World nations may be inclined toward socialism because it offers an opportunity to turn backward nations into modern societies rapidly. But the Soviet Union's past failures to maintain its dominant position in Indonesia, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt and Ghana; China's total break from the USSR in the 1960's; and Angola's and Mozambique's continued strong economic contacts with the West indicate that there is not necessarily a deep-rooted commitment to the Soviet brand of scientific-socialism in the Third

World. In fact, exactly the opposite may well be the case. Many Third World leaders are willing to manipulate the superpowers in an attempt to further their own interests. They use Soviet weapons to fight wars of national liberation, to resolve civil conflicts, and to defend themselves from regional rivals that threaten their survival or territorial integrity. However, once successful, they turn more to the West for trade and developmental assistance.

Clearly it is not in American interests for the Soviet Union or its proxies to use military force to overthrow governments. Likewise, it is not in US interests for Soviet proxies or clandestine agents to provoke anarchy, civil war, or domestic disturbances that lead to the overthrow of legitimate government. The United States also does not want to see the Soviets use proxy forces to pressure or influence the outcome of civil wars or revolutions.

However, the long-term advancement of US interests and the achievement of its objectives of stability and peaceful solutions to world problems are probably best served by economic and political programs that work to eliminate Third World internal and endemic problems which invite Soviet meddling. To some degree, the United States should welcome a shift in strategic interests and competition with the Soviet Union toward the Third World, where it has more advantages than does Moscow. The most critical problems confronting most Third World nations are problems of modernization and how to establish stable governments in newly independent states; provide adequate health and educational services; diversify economic and political systems while at the same time safeguarding and maintaining social values; develop managerial expertise among political leaders which equips them to govern a modern nation-state; and accommodate the rising expectations of a growing middle class which is an almost inevitable creation of successful modernization. The Soviet record in responding to such problems is not that good. While Moscow does provide technical assistance to help Third World nations overcome the lack of expertise in managing and operating aid projects, Soviet economic aid is still targeted toward a few countries which receive large credits for high visibility, heavy industry projections. Very little assistance is provided to help nations manage the social, economic, and political ramifications of the modernization process. On the rhetorical level, the USSR has given its qualified endorsement of the south's call for a New International Economic

Order (NIEO). In practice, it has done very little to provide firm economic or political assistance. The United States needs to initiate actions which not only highlight the inconsistency between Soviet words and actions on the NIEO issue, but also demonstrate the US commitment to help Third World nations meet their political and economic needs.

It would be naive to think that the United States can handle the Soviet challenge in the Third World totally by economic and political incentives. Given both the Soviet and US historical record, it is only natural to expect that during the coming decade the United States will be required to use or threaten to use its military forces to insure that weaker more vulnerable nations are not coerced by Moscow or its allies. When such situations occur, the employment of US forces should not be overly constrained by inflated assumptions about Soviet power projection capabilities.

Moscow does have the capability to support certain types of Third World insurrections and guerrilla activities, when its clients are unopposed by a sophisticated military adversary. The Soviet Navy can serve as an interpositionary force in many Third World conflicts and thus increase the risk calculations recognized by American policymakers. In areas close to the USSR—the North Atlantic, Eastern Mediterranean, South Asia, and North Pacific region—where the Soviet naval and ground forces are concentrated and they can obtain reliable air support, Soviet forces could obtain a geopolitical advantage over the United States. Any US military operation in such areas would be a risky undertaking. However, as one moves further from the USSR, particularly toward Africa south of the Sahara, Soviet warfighting and force projection capabilities become less significant.

The recent invasion of Afghanistan occurred within that arc of primary Soviet geopolitical advantage. Moscow was able to move ground divisions by way of long, methodical road marches from bases within Russia to major Afghan cities easily within range of VTA capabilities. Moreover, if it had been required, tactical fighters could have been deployed from Soviet bases avoiding range and refueling constraints. These Soviet advantages, which maximized Soviet military capabilities in Afghanistan, may not exist as one moves further from Soviet borders.

This is not an argument for a confrontationalist strategy with the Soviets. Neither superpower's interests would be best served by

needless military confrontations over nonvital areas when there is always a risk that any direct Soviet-American confrontation could escalate to a nuclear war. However, US interests equally are not served if the USSR concludes that it can pursue its peacetime objectives through military diplomacy without counter actions by the West. On one hand, we must not underestimate Soviet military capabilities. On the other hand, we should not exaggerate Soviet power projection capabilities to the point that the United States deters itself from taking appropriate military actions when its interests are threatened by Soviet activities.

A third major issue which needs to be given almost immediate attention by both superpowers relates to reestablishing a dialogue between Moscow and Washington on East-West issues. It is probably not possible to revive detente as it existed in the early 1970's. In both capitals detente was oversold for domestic political purposes. As a result, neither Washington nor Moscow ever seriously considered how politically fragile detente was.

However, if the United States continues to believe that one of its major objectives is to improve East-West relations in an attempt to defuse sources of potential military conflict, now—not later—is the time to get that process in motion. As was discussed earlier, a political succession crisis in the USSR looms in the not too distant future. Reviving Soviet-American discussions on issues such as arms control, technology transfer, East-West trade, and superpower activities in the Third World needs to be started before Brezhnev dies, for at least two reasons. First, it is unlikely during an active succession struggle that any of Brezhnev's heirs would want to propose new, potentially divisive, foreign policy initiatives which might undermine their position. As a result, if nothing has been done on this issue before Brezhnev dies, it will probably not receive significant Soviet attention until after the succession struggle ends. Second, those groups within the Soviet Union which tend to support the idea of a continuing dialogue on political issues between the two superpowers also tend to be more politically moderate than other groups. They are more inclined to favor East-West trade. They generally support arms control negotiations. Also, they have a tendency to believe that Moscow must ultimately move away from basing its superpower status solely on military criteria. And, they believe that no one could be, in any real terms, a winner in a nuclear conflict between the United States and USSR. It

is in US long-term interests that these groups emerge from the Soviet succession struggle in a strong political position. Reviving an East-West dialogue and attempting to defuse some of the political tension which currently separates Washington and Moscow do not guarantee that a moderate faction will become the dominant Soviet group. Nevertheless, US policy should have as one aim to reinforce those in the Soviet Union who are more inclined toward a cooperative approach to solving Soviet problems rather than giving implicit encouragement to those who favor more "conservative" or autarkic approaches to Soviet domestic and international problems.

Finally, given the increasing domestic strains facing Moscow in the coming decade, we need to ask ourselves what role economic diplomacy should play in our future relations with the Soviet Union. On one hand, we do not want to send the wrong political signals to Moscow by following a *laissez-faire* economic approach. Some relationship between the Soviet Union's global behavior and its ability to acquire US trade and technology needs to exist. On the other hand, publicly attempting to beat the Soviets into submission, even when their economy is under strain, will probably not achieve desired results. Moscow is very sensitive not only about the substance but also the appearance of being treated as a superpower. For example, in the months immediately preceding the passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, the Soviets allowed more Jews to immigrate than at any other time. However, as soon as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment specifically tied Jewish immigration to most-favored-nation trading status, Jewish immigration was curtailed significantly. No matter how much Moscow wanted trade concessions, it could not accept such a public affront as the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

When considering the use of future economic pressures, it will be particularly important that American actions do not convince the Soviets that the best—or only—alternative for solving their economic problems is autarky. A Soviet Union which decides upon this approach would be more "hawkish," more conservative on East-West issues, and possibly even more inclined than it is now to use its traditional tools of military diplomacy (arms sales, military advisers, proxies, and threatened and unilateral use of force) to obtain its objectives. No US interests or objectives would be best served if US actions caused Moscow to adopt such a policy.

These are just a few of the options which need to be considered. None of them, individually or collectively, will result in a risk-free environment for the United States. But, that in its own right is an important issue for any President to articulate to the American people. Too much anxiety and policy in recent years has been a reaction to the inevitable and irrevocable loss of total military security and political-economic superiority that we once enjoyed. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union control international events in the manner that they once did. The United States has advantages and disadvantages in its competition with the Soviet Union and vice versa. The decade of the 1980's will be a challenging period for US policymakers. However, given Soviet trends, it is not inevitable that the 1980's will be an era in which Moscow will have more political-military advantages than does Washington. How well either superpower can achieve its national interests and objectives will in large measure depend on how well it can balance its shortfalls in certain areas with advantages in others.



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